

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 COME-00 EPA-01 CG-00
DOTE-00 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02 DODE-00
EB-08 INR-10 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 DOE-15 INT-05 PA-01 DLOS-09
/127 W

-----057890 311322Z /53

R 302109Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9346
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 10659

GENEVA FOR USDEL LOS

DEPT PASS NOAA, EPA, USCG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, FR
SUBJECT: AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL

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REF: PARIS 9771.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY SUBMITS SECOND REPORT
AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL. EMBOFF AND EPA EXPERT HAVE
OBSERVED EASTWARD EXTENT OF POLLUTION ON LAND
AND FROM THE AIR. EPA AND USCG EXPERTS HAVE
EXTENSIVELY BRIEFED APPROPRIATE GOF OFFICIALS IN

BRITTANY AND PARIS ON USG PROCEDURES. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF AND EPA OIL SPILL EXPERT BIGLANE DROVE MARCH 22 TO THE THEN FURTHEST EXTENT OF POLLUTION AS ROSCOFF BOTH TO OBSERVE THE SPILL AND DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH PROFESSOR CABIOCH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ROSCOFF BIOLOGY LABORATORY (UNIVERSITY OF PARIS) WHO HAD WORKED WITH BIGLANE ON VERY SIMILAR PROBLEM CAUSED BY TORREY CANYON OIL SPILL ALMOST EXACTLY ELEVEN YEARS BEFORE. CABIOCH SAID THIS AREA IMPOSSIBLE

TO CLEAN UP WITH DISPERSANTS DUE TO TOXICITY FOR COMMERCIALLY IMPORTANT MARINE LIFE. CABIOCH ALSO BELIEVED BURYING OF OIL OR SAND POLLUTED WITH OIL RISKED POLLUTING UNDERGROUND WATER. THIS PROBLEM IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE IN ROSCOFF AREA SINCE THAT TOWN GETS WATER FROM POINTS FAR CLOSER TO THE SEA THAN THE REST OF BRITTANY. ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF THE UNUSUALLY HIGH SPRING TIDE WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO REACH ITS MAXIMUM ON MARCH 26, CABIOCH SAW CLEAR POSSIBILITY OIL POLLUTION IN ROSCOFF WATER SUPPLY. IT PROBABLY HOWEVER RESTRICTED ROSCOFF AREA. OTHER BRITTANY AREAS GET WATER FROM TOO FAR INLAND TO HAVE THIS PROBLEM POSSIBLE.

3. CABIOCH SAW LONG TERM DAMAGES TO LOBSTER, CONFIDENTIAL

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OYSTER, CRAB AND CRUSTACEAN FARMING AREAS. HE ESTIMATED FROM HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE TORREY CANYON DISASTER OF 1967, WHICH INVOLVED PERHAPS ONE-FOURTH

AS MUCH OIL ON BRITTANY COAST AS THIS ONE, THAT IT WOULD TAKE THREE YEARS TO RESTORE THE BALANCE OF THE ECOSYSTEM. COMMENT: CABIOCH'S SUPERIOR, PROFESSOR BERGERARD, IS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS SAYING THAT IT WOULD TAKE THREE YEARS IF NATURE TOOK ITS COURSE FOR THE ECOLOGICAL BALANCE TO BE REESTABLISHED IN THE ROSCOFF AREA. BUT IF A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF CHEMICAL DISPERSANTS WERE USED, IT MIGHT TAKE UP TO FIVE. HOWEVER, BOTH SCIENTISTS EMPHASIZED IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFF THAT COMPARING THIS DISASTER WITH THAT OF THE TORREY CANYON NEEDS CAREFUL STUDY.

4. THAT MORNING USCG'S DONOHUE (EXECUTIVE OFFICER GULF STRIKE TEAM) AT SPECIFIC REQUEST OF FRENCH AUTHORITIES FLEW OVER AREA IN GOF HELICOPTER AND EXPLAINED USG SOPS GOVERNING BOTH EPA AND COAST GUARD STRIKE FORCE ACTIONS IN DEALING WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THE US.

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5. A TEAM OF SIX BIOLOGISTS FROM EPA, HEADED BY DR.
SCHNEIDER, AFTER CLEARING WITH EMBASSY, WHICH INSURED
THAT THERE WOULD BE GOF CONTACTS FOR THEM, ARRIVED AT
BREST SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH.

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6. DONOHOE AND BIGLANE BRIEFED AMBASSADOR FRIDAY, MARCH 24. EMBASSY THEN VOLUNTEERED TO HAVE THEM BRIEF APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE. OFFER WAS ACCEPTED AND THE TWO EXPERTS, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, CALLED ON REAR ADMIRAL OROSCO, CHIEF OF THE PRIMIN'S MILITARY CABINET WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BRONGNIART, CABINET ADVISOR TO PRIMIN. ADMIRAL EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR USC'S OFFER OF ADVICE ON PROBLEM, AND NOTED THAT HE HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH KEEPING TRACK OF ALL GOF ACTIVITIES ON AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL.

7. OROSCO NOTED THAT MARC BECAM HAS BEEN APPOINTED GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SPOT, OFFICIAL PRESS

SPOKESMAN AND COORDINATOR OF POLLUTION CLEANUP OPERATIONS. OROSCO NOTED THAT BECAM IS MAYOR OF QUIMPER, DEPUTY FROM MINISTERRE, AS WELL AS UNDER SECRETARY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTERIOR MINISTRY AND THUS WELL QUALIFIED TO UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL SITUATION. IN ANSWER TO DIRECT QUESTION ABOUT CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTER D'ORNANO'S APPEARANCE ON TV, OROSCO TOLD EMBOFF D'ORNANO HAS NO OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE OIL SPILL CLEANUP.

8. IN ANSWER TO DIRECT QUESTION FROM OROSCO, BIGLANE INFORMED OROSCO THAT IN THE US EXPERIENCE NO MATTER HOW GOOD TECHNOLOGY MAY BE, IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO HAVE A STRONG ORGANIZATION OF OIL SPILL CLEANUPS WITH ONE SINGLE LEADER. BIGLANE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THE US EXPERIENCES 10,000 OIL SPILLS PER YEAR, BUT 80 PERCENT OF THESE INVOLVE LESS THAN 100 GALLONS. CONCERNING OVERALL DIRECTION, BOTH BIGLANE AND DONOHOE

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NOTED THAT NO MATTER WHERE A SPILL OCCURS IN US JURISDICTION THERE IS ONE CENTRAL POINT OF AUTHORITY FOR CLEANING IT UP. SPILLS OCCURING PRIMARILY OFF OUR SHORES OR ON THE GREAT LAKES ARE CLEANED UP UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COAST GUARD. SPILLS OCCURING ON INLAND WATERWAYS ARE CLEANED UP UNDER SUPERVISION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EPA. BIGLANE ADDED THAT US SPILLS ARE ABOUT EVENLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TWO. AMONG THE FACTORS WE THINK IMPORTANT ARE COMMUNICATIONS, TRAINING AND SUFFICIENT STORAGE SPACE FOR WASTES.

9. ADMIRAL OROSCO DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN

USG BUDGET FOR THESE CLEANUP ACTIVITIES. BIGLANE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH EPA HAD A TOTAL OF \$5 BILLION, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THAT WAS TAKEN UP BY MUNICIPAL SEWAGE PLANT SUPPORTING PROGRAMS. IT WAS ALSO NOTED THAT THE COAST GUARD HAD MANY OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES THAN THE OIL SPILL PROGRAM. BIGLANE ADDED

THAT THERE IS A WHOLE OIL SPILL CLEAN UP INDUSTRY IN THE US AND THIS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO CONTRACT OUT MUCH OF THIS WORK.

10. ADMIRAL OROSCO ALSO DISPLAYED A GOOD DEAL OF INTEREST IN BIGLANE'S AND DONOHUE'S OPINIONS ON HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE FOR THE OIL TO EVAPORATE, DISPERSE OR OTHERWISE JUST GO AWAY. BIGLANE SAID NOT MORE THAN 40 PERCENT USUALLY EVAPORATES, AND NOTED ALSO THAT IT MIXES WITH THE WATER, PRODUCING WHAT IS KNOWN IN THE TRADE AS "CHOCOLATE MOUSSE", A BROWN EMULSION OF WATER AND OIL. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PROBLEM ISN'T JUST GOING TO GO AWAY AND THE LONGER ONE WAITS THE LARGER AMOUNT OF POLLUTION ONE HAS TO DEAL WITH.
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Message Attributes

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